

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)	
)	
Hilmar WECHSEL)	Group Art Unit: 3689
)	
Application No.: 10/787,205)	Examiner: NGUYEN, THUY-VI THI
)	
Filed: February 27, 2004)	
)	
For: SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR)	Confirmation No.: 4680
MANAGING PRODUCT RETURNS)	
USING RETURN)	
AUTHORIZATION NUMBERS)	

Attention: Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER BOARD RULE § 41.37

In support of the Notice of Appeal filed June 1, 2011, and further to Board Rule 41.37, Appellant presents this brief and enclose herewith the fee of \$540.00 required under 37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2).

This Appeal Brief is being filed concurrently with a petition for an Extension of Time for 1 month, and the appropriate fee.

This Appeal responds to the Examiner's decision mailed March 1, 2011, rejection of claims 1-6, 9-36, and 40-47.

If any additional fees are required or if the enclosed payment is insufficient, Appellant requests that the required fees be charged to Deposit Account 06-0916.

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Real Party in Interest

SAP AG is the real party in interest.

Related Appeals and Interferences

There are currently no other appeals or interferences, of which appellant, appellant's legal representative, or assignee are aware, that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status of Claims

Claims 7, 8, and 37-39 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. All of pending claims 1-9, 36, and 40-47 were finally rejected in the Final Office Action mailed April 5, 2011 (hereinafter "the Final Office Action"). The rejections applied to those claims are at issue in this appeal. The rejected claims involved in this appeal are set forth in the attached Claims Appendix. No claims have been allowed or objected to.

Status of Amendments

No amendments have been filed subsequent to the final rejection of claims 1-6, 9-36 and 40-47 in the Final Office Action mailed May 1, 2011.

Summary Of Claimed Subject Matter

Independent Claim 1

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 1 recites a computer-implemented method for managing a return of a product (see, e.g., method shown in Fig. 2). The method comprises the following steps, performed by a computer (Fig. 2). The method includes the step of receiving at a first computer-implemented management system a return request for the product, wherein the return request is for a quantity of the product greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The method includes the step of determining whether the return request is authorized (Fig. 2, element 203). The method includes the steps of creating a first record in the first system in response to a determination that the return request is authorized, the first record including a return authorization number (RAN) and issuing, from the first system, the RAN associated with the return request (Fig. 2, element 207). The method includes the steps of creating a second record in a second computer-implemented management system in response to receiving the RAN from the first system, the second record being a warehouse request comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the return request (page 5, lines 6-7). The method includes the step of searching a database of the second system for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 14, lines 18-22). The method includes the steps of determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record matches a quantity of

the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The method includes the step of splitting the second record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method includes the step of re-combining the plurality of new records into the second record, when the quantity of the product associated with return request included in the second record matches the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 6-10). The method includes the step of updating the second record to reflect that the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record matches the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 4, lines 1-4).

Independent Claim 9

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 9 recites a computer-implemented method for managing a product return (see, e.g., method shown in Fig. 2). The method includes the step of authorizing, using a first computer-implemented management system, a request from a customer to return a product, wherein the request from a customer is for a quantity of the product greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The method includes the step of creating at least one record in each of a plurality of second computer-implemented management systems of a supplier when the request for the product return is authorized, the at least one record being a warehouse request comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery

item including a unique identifier, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the request (Fig. 2, element 207). The method includes the step of assigning the unique identifier to the product return (page 3, lines 17-18). The method includes the step of associating the unique identifier with each record corresponding the product to be returned (page 3, lines 16-19). The method includes the step of searching a database associated with the second systems for the pending delivery item using a unique identifier associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 3, lines 20-23). The method includes the step of determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 12, lines 5-7). The method includes the step of splitting the at least one record in each of the second systems into a plurality of new records including the unique identifier and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method includes the step of exchanging information regarding the product return between the second systems utilizing the unique identifier (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 20-23).

Independent Claim 13

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 13 recites computer-implemented method for managing a product return (see, e.g., method shown in Fig. 2). The method includes the step of assigning at least one return authorization number

(RAN) to the product return, wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The method includes the step of creating, in a first database of a supplier, a return authorization record for the product return, the return authorization record comprising the RAN (page 4, lines 5-9). The method includes the step of creating, in a second database of the supplier, a warehouse record for the product return, the warehouse record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return (page 4, lines 9-11). The method includes the step of searching the second database using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 23, lines 8-10). The method includes the step of determining, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the warehouse record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The method includes the step of splitting the warehouse record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the warehouse record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method includes the step of updating the return authorization record and the warehouse record to include information associated with the RAN (page 4, lines 1-4).

Independent Claim 20

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 20 recites a computer-implemented method for managing a product return (see, e.g., method shown in Fig. 2). indexing a first record in a first database of a supplier for a product return using at least one unique identifier, wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one (page 4, lines 14-16). The method includes the step of creating a second record for the product return in a second database of the supplier, the second record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the at least one unique identifier, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return (page 5, lines 5-10). The method includes the step of searching the second database using a unique identifier associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 23, lines 8-10). The method includes the step of determining, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The method includes the step of splitting the second record in the second database into a plurality of new records including the at least one unique identifier and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method includes the step of exchanging, between the first and second databases, information related to the product return, wherein each item of exchanged information is identified by the at least one unique identifier (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 20-23).

Independent Claim 21

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 21 recites a computer-readable medium including a memory containing instructions for carrying out a method for managing a product return (page 4, lines 13-14). The method comprises creating a first record in a customer relationship management (CRM) system of a supplier for a product return using at least one return authorization number (RAN), wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The method comprises creating a second record for the product return in a warehouse management (WM) system of the supplier using the return authorization number, the second record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including at least one RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return (page 5, lines 6-7). The method comprises searching a database associated with WM system for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 14, lines 18-22). The method comprises determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The method comprises splitting the second record into a plurality of new records including the at least one RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method comprises exchanging between the management systems information related to the product return, wherein each item of

exchanged information is identified by the return authorization number (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 20-23).

Independent Claim 24

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 24 recites a computer-readable medium including a memory containing instructions for carrying out a method (page 4, lines 13-14). The method comprises assigning a return authorization number (RAN) to an approved product return, wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The method comprises creating, in a first database of a supplier, a return authorization record for the approved product return, the return authorization record comprising the RAN (Fig. 2, element 207). The method comprises creating, in a second database of the supplier, a pending delivery record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return (page 5, lines 6-7). The method comprises searching the second database for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 14, lines 18-22). The method comprises determining, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the pending delivery record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The method comprises splitting the pending delivery record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in

the delivery record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method comprises updating the return authorization and the pending delivery records using the RAN (page 4, lines 9-11).

Independent Claim 31

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 31 recites a computer-readable medium including a memory containing instructions for carrying out a method for managing a product return (page 4, lines 13-14). The method comprises authorizing using a first computer-implemented management system a request from a customer to return a product, wherein the request is for a quantity of the product greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The method comprises creating at least one record in each of a plurality of second management systems of a supplier for handling the product return, the at least one record being a warehouse request comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including a unique identifier, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the request (page 5, lines 6-7). The method comprises assigning the unique identifier to the product return, associating the unique identifier with each record corresponding to the product to be returned and searching a database associated with the second systems for the pending delivery item using a unique identifier associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 14, lines 18-22). The method comprises determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The method comprises splitting the at least one record in into a plurality of new

records including the unique identifier and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The method comprises exchanging information regarding the product return between the second systems utilizing the unique identifier (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 20-23).

Independent Claim 32

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 32 recites a system for managing a return of a product (page 3, lines 7-8). The system comprises a first computer comprising a first database of a supplier configured to receive a return request for the product, and to generate a first record comprising a return authorization number (RAN) for the product if the return request is authorized, wherein a quantity of the returned item is greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The system comprises a second computer comprising a second database of the supplier, in communication with the first database, configured to create a second record corresponding to the return, the second record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the returned item associated with the return request (page 5, lines 6-7). The second computer is configured to determine, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the returned item associated with the return request included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24), and configured to split the second record into a plurality of new records including

the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the returned item associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10). The first and second database are each configured to exchange information regarding the return utilizing the RAN (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 20-23).

Independent Claim 40

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 40 recites a system for managing a product return comprising a processor, and a memory comprising instructions which, when executed by the processor cause the system to receive a return authorization number (RAN) and to create at least one record corresponding to a product return, wherein each record corresponding to the return item comprises a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product return (page 3, lines 7-8 and page 5, lines 6-7). The memory comprises instructions cause the system to search a database for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 14, lines 18-22). The memory comprises instructions cause the system to determine, based on a search of the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the at least one record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The memory comprises instructions cause the system to split the at least one record corresponding to the product return into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different

statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product return included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10).

Independent Claim 41

As fully supported in Appellant's Specification, claim 41 recites a system for managing a product return, the system comprises a first computer of a supplier (page 3, lines 7-8). The first computer comprising a user interface for receiving a return request from a customer, wherein a quantity of the return request is greater than one (see Fig. 2, item 201 and page 10, line 3). The first computer comprising a user interface for creating a first record comprising a return authorization number (RAN) and transmitting to the customer an authorization for a product return comprising the RAN (page 16, lines 7-9). The system comprises a second computer of the supplier, in communication with the first computer, configured to receive the RAN, create, upon receipt of the return authorization, a second record in a second database comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the return request (page 5, lines 6-7). The second computer is further configured to search a database associated with the second computer for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse (page 14, lines 18-22). The second computer is further configured to determine, based on a search of the database, if the quantity of the return request included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse (page 14, lines 18-24). The second computer is further configured to split the second record into a plurality of new records

including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the return request included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (Fig. 6 and page 23, lines 1-10).

Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

Claims 1-6, 9-36, and 40-47 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,536,659 to *Hauser et al.* ("*Hauser*") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0178074 to *Bloom* ("*Bloom*").

Argument

The Examiner must make several basic factual inquiries to determine whether the claims of a patent application are obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103. These factual inquiries, set forth in *Graham v. John Deere*, require the Examiner to:

- (1) Determine the scope and content of the prior art;
- (2) Ascertain the differences between the prior art and the claims in issue;
- (3) Resolve the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art; and
- (4) Evaluate evidence of secondary considerations.

See *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 17-18 (1966).

Here the Final Office Action has at least failed to provide elements (1) and (2), determine the scope and content of the prior art and to ascertain differences between the instant application and the cited art. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rests on two contentions: A) certain aspects of the independent claims that are not found in the prior art may be disregarded and B) other aspects of the claims are obvious in view of *Hauser and Bloom*. Independent claims 1, 9, 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, 40, and 41 are not obvious in view of the cited art at least because both of these contentions are incorrect.

A. The Examiner disregards the claim limitation “when the quality of the product associated with the return request [...]” because of an incorrect reading of M.P.E.P 2106.II.C.

On page 32 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner contends that, because of the use of the word “when,” the following claim feature of claim 1 is “conditional/optional” (emphasis added):

splitting the second record into a plurality of new records the plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, when the

quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse. (Emphasis added).

The Examiner further contends on pages 8 and 31-32 of the Final Office Action that, because the claim feature is allegedly "conditional/optional," MPEP 2106.II.C provides that it "does not limit the scope of a claim or claim limitation" and, therefore, should be disregarded. The Examiner comes to the same conclusion regarding the similar features of independent claims 9, 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, 40, and 41.¹ The Examiner is incorrect on both counts: 1) MPEP 2106.II.C does not exclude "conditional/optional" language from consideration and 2) there is no basis in MPEP 2106.II.C for disregarding claimed features because of the use of the word "when."

1. MPEP 2106.II.C does not exclude "conditional/optional" language from consideration.

MPEP 2106.II.C does not exclude "**conditional/optional**" (emphasis added) subject matter from consideration. In fact, the phrase "conditional/optional" is not used anywhere in the MPEP. Moreover, the term "conditional" is not mentioned anywhere in section 2106 of the MPEP, much less in MPEP 2106.II.C. Rather, MPEP 2106.II.C excludes:

Language that **suggests or makes optional but does not require** steps to be performed or does not limit a claim to a particular structure does not limit the scope of a claim or claim limitation. (Emphasis added).

The Examiner concludes on page 32 of the Final Office Action that:

¹ See Final Office Action pages 16-18 for independent claim 9; Final Office Action pages 23-24 for independent claim 13; Final Office Action page 27 for independent claims 20, 21, and 24; and Final Office Action pages 28-29 for independent claims 31, 32, 40, and 41.

The claimed limitation appears to be the conditional/optional language since it recited the condition when the quantity of the product in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received, and then the splitting record will occur. In the other words, when or in the condition if all of the quantity/or full of the quantity is received at the same time, then the splitting/dividing record in to a Plurality of new records files will not occur or happen. Therefore, this claimed limitation is interpreted to be a conditional or optional language. (Emphasis in original).

The Examiner appears to define "conditional/optional" language as "conditional or optional" (emphasis added) language. Moreover, the Examiner concludes that the claimed phrase is "conditional or optional" language by virtue of "recit[ing] the condition when [...]" (emphasis in original). Thus, the Examiner apparently admits that the claimed phrase is "conditional or optional" because it is conditional (i.e., "recit[es] a condition") not because it is optional. There is no basis in the MPEP for disregarding "conditional" subject matter.

The quote from MPEP 2106.II.C above actually implies a distinction between "conditional" and "optional" language. MPEP 2106.II.C equates "[l]anguage that suggests or makes optional" with language that "does not require" steps to be performed. In contrast, "conditional" language, sets forth steps that are required to be performed upon fulfillment of a condition. The Examiner implicitly acknowledges this on at least page 32 of the Final Office Action ("[the claim] recited the condition when the quantity of the product in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received, and then the splitting record will occur." emphasis added). Therefore, "conditional" language cannot be construed as language that "makes optional but does not require steps to be performed" (emphasis added). For at least this reason, MPEP 2106.II.C does not exclude "conditional" language.

For at least this reason, MPEP 2106.II.C cannot be used to exclude “conditional/optional” language from consideration. Therefore, even if the Examiner were correct to conclude that:

splitting the second record into a plurality of new records the plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, when the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse (emphasis added)

is “conditional/optional” language, which Appellant does not concede, the Examiner would still be incorrect to use MPEP 2106.II.C as a basis to exclude “conditional/optional” features from consideration.

Because the Examiner’s rejection relies upon an incorrect reading of MPEP 2106.II.C, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

2. There is no basis in MPEP 2106.II.C for concluding that claimed features including the word “when” should be excluded from consideration.

Regardless of whether or not the claimed feature is “conditional/optional,” the Examiner’s conclusion that the claimed phrase may be disregarded because of its inclusion of the word “when” has no basis in MPEP 2106.II.C.

Although MPEP 2106.II.C lists several examples of “[l]anguage that suggests or makes optional” and language that “does not require” steps to be performed, none of these examples include, imply, or otherwise suggest the word “when” is to be included in this category. More specifically, MPEP 2106.II.C lists, as examples of “[l]anguage that suggests or makes optional” and language that “does not require” steps to be performed:

- (A) statements of intended use or field of use,
- (B) "adapted to" or "adapted for" clauses,
- (C) "wherein" clauses, or
- (D) "whereby" clauses.

On at least pages 31-32 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner appears to acknowledge that the use of the word "when" does not fall into any of categories explicitly excluded by MPEP 2106.II.C:

Even though the Examiner asserts that the claimed limitation [...] does not recite one of phrase [sic] as shown in (A-B) [sic]² above to indicate the limitation is an optional language, the list of these above examples is not intended to be exhaustive.

This is correct. The Examiner also correctly points out that MPEP 2106.II.C indicates that the list is not meant to be exhaustive. However, MPEP 2106.II.C clearly states that language to be excluded "suggests or makes optional" claim features. The Examiner does not even allege that the word "when" "[suggests] or makes optional." Instead, the Examiner alleges merely that it "recit[es] a condition" (Final Office Action, page 32). For reasons argued above, language that "recit[es] a condition" is not "optional" language within the meaning of MPEP 2106. Therefore, the Examiner's own argument on page 32 of the Final Office Action appears to imply that the claimed phrase does not "[suggest] or [make] optional" within the meaning of MPEP 2106. The Office Action's contention to the contrary appears to contradict at least MPEP 2106.II.C. For at least this reason, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

² Page 31 of the Final Office Action to which the Examiner is referring actually lists all four factors (A)-(D). Therefore, Appellant assumes that the Examiner means to correctly indicate that the claimed phrase does not correspond to any of the four factors (A)-(D).

B. The Examiner's contention that independent claims 1, 9, 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, 40, and 41 are obvious in view of *Hauser* and *Bloom* is incorrect.

The independent claims are not obvious in view of *Hauser* and *Bloom* at least because the combination of *Hauser* and *Bloom* fails to teach several claimed features and because the Examiner's proposed modification of *Bloom* is contrary to the teachings of *Bloom*.

- 1. The Examiner's proposed combination of *Hauser* and *Bloom* fails to disclose at least the claimed "splitting the second record into a plurality of new records [...] when the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse."**

On page 9 of the Final Office Action,³ the Examiner argues that it would be obvious to split the record of *Hauser*:

as taught by BLOOM so that the adjusted quantity product in a new record would match with the actual physical quantity of product that was received/or received quantity of product and also would be easy to keep track of what item/product have been received {see *Bloom*, par. 0187, lines 43-79}.

This statement represents a misunderstanding of the process of splitting records disclosed in paragraph [0187] of *Bloom*.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, *Bloom* does not teach in paragraph [0187] splitting records:

so that the adjusted quantity product in a new record would match with the actual physical quantity of product that was received/or

³ Page 9 of the Final Office Action includes the analysis of claim 1 with respect to this feature. For analysis of the similar features in other independent claims see Final Office Action page 18 for independent claim 9; Final Office Action pages 25 for independent claim 13; Final Office Action page 27 for independent claims 20, 21, and 24; and Final Office Action pages 28-29 for independent claims 31, 32, 40, and 41.

received quantity of product and also would be easy to keep track of what item/product have been received.

Rather, *Bloom* discloses splitting records to correct a packing error in a delivery. *Bloom* discloses "method[s] and apparatus[es] for efficient package delivery and storage" (title, emphasis added). In paragraph [0187], *Bloom* discloses steps to correct a "packing error" in a delivery when a "package was under-packed (meaning a lesser quantity [than scheduled for delivery] was physically placed in the package)." In order to solve this problem, *Bloom* discloses "creat[ing] a new Order Detail Record] to split the quantity on the existing record 1202" where the new Order Detail Record has "a Quantity equal to the short adjustment quantity." In other words, *Bloom* splits the record in order to create two new packages in order to fulfill the original order request. As *Bloom* discloses in paragraph [0187]:

The under-packed item quantity can be picked from a case and packed into a package at the destination RDC 1180-1 as the Package Creation Program (330) attempts to satisfy the demand of the new Order Detail record 1202 created by the transaction used to correct the under-pack error.

Bloom further discloses in paragraph [0188] that "[f]ollowing the creation of packages [...] delivery shipments of pages to be delivered [...] can be created." Therefore, *Bloom* "correct[s] the under-pack error" by "pack[ing] the under-packed item quantity] into a [second] package at the destination RDC 1180-1" and creating "delivery shipments" based on the packages.

Similarly, *Bloom* discloses "partially fill[ing] an order for a delivery] by creating a new Order Detail record 1202 and splitting the Order Detail Quantity" in paragraph [0099]. However, as *Bloom* discloses in paragraph [0099], the splitting occurs "where a selected Order Detail record 1202 [calls for a] quantity

greater than what can be filled by the cases, which have been included in the retailer shipment." In other words, *Bloom* discloses splitting records where there is a shortfall of inventory stored for delivery, not according to any "quantity of the product received at the warehouse" (emphasis added), as claimed. Because of this, *Bloom* fails to make up for the deficiencies of *Hauser* at least with respect to the claimed features of claim 1:

splitting the second record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses [...] when the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse.

For similar reasons, *Bloom* fails to make up for the deficiencies of *Hauser* with respect to the similar features of independent claims 9, 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, 40, and 41. For at least these reasons, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

2. The Examiner admits that the combination of *Hauser* and *Bloom* fails to disclose at least one claimed feature and provides only a conclusory statement that this feature is "obvious."

The key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 is the clear articulation of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious. The Supreme Court in *KSR* noted that the analysis supporting a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 should be made explicit. The Court quoting *In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d 977, 988, 78 USPQ2d 1329, 1336 (Fed. Cir. 2006), stated that "[R]ejections on obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with

some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness.'" *In re Kahn*, 441 F.3d 977, 988 (Fed. Cir. 2006). MPEP 2141.III.

On page 10 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner admits that:

HAUSER/BLOOM does not mention about the recombining the records into a single record when the quantity of the product matches the quantity of the received product.

Presumably, the Examiner means to imply that *Hauser* and *Bloom* fail to disclose:

re-combining the plurality of new records into the second record, wherein the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record matches the quantity of the product received at the warehouse,

as claimed in independent claim 1. The Examiner, however, alleges that:

it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to recombine the all of the records into a single record when the quantity of received product matches with the original quantity of product stored in the record in order to indicate that the problem has been solved.

Clearly the Examiner's rejection does not meet the requirements set forth in MPEP 2141.III. The Examiner provides nothing more than a conclusory statement that recombination of the records "would be obvious." The Examiner admits that the claimed feature is not present in any of the cited art, does not suggest that the claimed feature is known in the art, and does not take Official Notice of the claimed feature. Therefore, the Examiner is merely asserting that the feature is "common knowledge" in the art without providing any evidentiary support, which is an unacceptable grounds of rejection.^{4,5}

⁴ "It is never appropriate to rely solely on 'common knowledge' in the art without evidentiary support in the record, as the principal evidence upon which a rejection was based." *Zurko*, 258 F.3d at 1385, 59 USPQ2d at 1697. MPEP 2144.03.A. (Emphasis Added).

To the extent that the Examiner identifies a motivation for providing the feature, that motivation is not found in any of the cited art and is virtually identical to the motivation provided in paragraph [057] of the instant specification. Paragraph [057] states that the records are to be re-combined "[u]pon receipt of the second engine [records] may be re-combined into a single WH Request [...] to reflect receipt of all outstanding product returns." Then, even if the Examiner's argument were considered not to be merely conclusory by virtue of its inclusion of this motivation, which Appellant submits would not be correct, the argument would still include impermissible hindsight reasoning under MPEP 2145.X.A because the only apparent source for both the motivation and the claimed feature is the instant specification.

The Examiner's rejection fails to correspond to any of the seven exemplary rationales that may support a conclusion of obviousness in MPEP 21413 ("Examples of Basic Requirements of a Prima Facie Case of Obviousness"):

(A) Combining prior art elements according to known methods to yield predictable results;

(B) Simple substitution of one known element for another to obtain predictable results;

(C) Use of known technique to improve similar devices (methods, or products) in the same way;

(D) Applying a known technique to a known device (method, or product) ready for improvement to yield predictable results;

(E) "Obvious to try" - choosing from a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success;

⁵⁴[A]ssertions of technical facts in the areas of esoteric technology or specific knowledge of the prior art must always be supported by citation to some reference work recognized as standard in the pertinent art." *In re Ahlert*, 424 F.2d at 1091, 165 USPQ at 420-21. MPEP 2144.03.A. (Emphasis Added).

(F) Known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations are predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art; or

(G) Some teaching, suggestion, or motivation in the prior art that would have led one of ordinary skill to modify the prior art reference or to combine prior art reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention.

With respect to exemplary rationales (A), (E), (F), and (G), the Examiner has failed to show or even suggest that "recombin[ing] all of the records into a single record" is among the prior art elements, among "a finite number of identified predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success," or "[k]nown in one field of endeavor." With respect to exemplary rationale (B), the Examiner's alleged combination is adding an unknown element, not substituting one known element for another. With respect to exemplary rationales (C) and (D), the Examiner has failed to assert that "recombin[ing] all of the records into a single record" is a "known technique."

Therefore, the Examiner provides no basis for this claimed feature other than to assert that it is "obvious." For at least this reason, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

3. The Examiner's proposed addition of record recombination to *Bloom* would at least change the principle of operation of *Bloom* and render *Bloom* unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

"If the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims prima facie obvious." *In re Ratti*, 270 F.2d 810, 123 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1959). MPEP

2143.01.V. MPEP 2143.01.VI provides that a proposed modification to a reference “cannot render the prior art unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.” The Examiner’s proposed modification to *Bloom* would at least change the principle of operation of *Bloom* and render *Bloom* unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

On page 10 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner proposes to recombine records of *Bloom* “when the quantity of received product matches with the original quantity of product stored in the record in order to indicate that the problem has been solved.” However, this condition, “when the quantity of received product matches with the original quantity of product,” never occurs in *Bloom* because the split records in *Bloom* represent deliveries. See at least paragraph [0187] of *Bloom* disclosing “correct[ing] the under-pack error” by “pack[ing] the under-packed item quantity] into a [second] package at the destination RDC 1180-1” and creating “delivery shipments” based on the packages. See also paragraph [0099] of *Bloom* which discloses that, just subsequent to creating a new Order Detail Record 1201 from an existing record 1202:

Status and Retailer Shipment Id on the existing record 1202 are not changed when the record 1202 is split. After scanning all of the Pick Grouping Id’s intended to be loaded onto the trailer (202) [for shipping].

That is, unlike the instant invention in which split records represent partial fulfillment of a single return request, the split records of *Bloom* represent two separate deliveries that are sent independently of one another (see quotes from *Bloom* paragraphs [0187] and [0099] above). Recombining the records after the

packages have been sent for delivery, even if it were possible, is contrary to the explicit teachings of *Bloom* at least in paragraphs [0187] and [0099].

Therefore, the Examiner's combination of *Hauser* and *Bloom* fails to teach the claimed feature of recombining the records, would at least change the principle of operation of *Bloom* and render *Bloom* unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. For at least these reasons, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

4. The Examiner's fails to consider all of the claimed features in at least independent claims 9, 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, and 41.

"All words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." In re Wilson, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970). MPEP 2143.03. MPEP 2143.03 also provides that "All Claim Limitations Must Be Considered" under "Examples of Basic Requirements of a Prima Facie Case of Obviousness."

In the analysis of claim 9 on from pages 12-19 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner fails to address the claimed limitation "creating at least one record in each of a plurality of second computer-implemented management systems of a supplier" (emphasis added).⁶ On pages 4-7 of the Final Office Action, the rejection seems to indicate that failing to address this feature is deliberate.⁷ More

⁶ See, in particular, page 12 of the Final Office Action in which the Examiner's recitation of this feature of claim 9 omits "of the supplier." See also the analysis of this feature that follows this recitation, which omits any mention of "of the supplier."

⁷ Although the Final Office Action refers to "the claimed limitation 'creating a record in a second computer system of the supplier'" on page 7 in the context of the rejection of claim 1, there is no such limitation of claim 1. In fact, the word "supplier" does not

specifically, the Examiner apparently recognizes that the cited art fails to teach this claimed feature, but concludes on page 7 of the Final Office Action:

While [independent claim 9 recites] that these [claimed] systems are the systems of the supplier, the ownership of the system doesn't appear to make a manipulative different [sic] in a method step of "creating a record." Therefore, *Hauser* discloses "creating a record in the Central return facility comprising a database" which corresponds to the claimed limitation "creating a record in a second computer system of the supplier" (Emphasis in original).

Therefore, the Examiner has chosen not to consider the claim words "of a supplier" because "the ownership of the system does not appear to make a manipulative different in a method step." The Examiner apparently also does not consider the claim word "supplier" in independent claims 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, and 41 for similar reasons.⁸ Omitting claim words from obviousness analysis is impermissible for any reason under at least MPEP 2143.03, as quoted above. Moreover, the Examiner's apparent reasoning for failing to consider these claimed features finds no basis in the MPEP or case law.

Even if the Examiner were correct to disregard the claimed feature with regard to claim 9 and other method claims, which Appellant respectfully submits

appear in claim 1. Therefore, Appellant assumes that this aspect of the Final Office Action is meant, instead, to refer to the limitation of claim 9 "creating at least one record in each of a plurality of second computer-implemented management systems of a supplier." This reasoning is also repeated on page 23 of the Final Office Action in the rejection of claim 13. Regardless of whether or not the failure to address the claimed feature "of the supplier" in claim 9 is deliberate, the rejection of claim 9 is improper by virtue of its failure to address the claimed feature.

⁸ The rejections of claims 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, and 41 each omit any mention of the claim word "supplier." Again, Appellant assumes that these omissions are deliberate and that the analysis on pages 4-7 and 13 of the Final Office Action is meant to apply to this feature in each of these independent claims.

he is not, the Examiner apparently also disregards similar claimed features in system claims 32 and 41. "Appear[ing not] to make a manipulative differen[ce] in a method" (emphasis added) certainly cannot be a reasonable basis for disregarding features of claims to a system.

For at least these reasons, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) with respect to claims 9, 13, 20, 24, 31, 32, and 41 should be withdrawn.

C. Dependent claims 2-6, 10-12, 14-19, 21-23, 25-30, 33-36, and 42-27

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 of claims depending from independent claims 1, 9, 13, 20, 21, 24, 31, 32, 40, and 41 are improper and should be withdrawn for at least reasons given above with respect to the independent claims.

D. Conclusion

For the reasons given above, the pending claims are allowable and reversal of the Examiner's rejections is respectfully requested.

To the extent any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this Appeal Brief, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jack R. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Dated: August 30, 2011

By: _____
Jack R. Smith
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Claims Appendix to Appeal Brief Under Rule 41.37(c)(1)(viii)

1. A computer-implemented method for managing a return of a product, the method comprising the steps, performed by a computer, of:
 - receiving at a first computer-implemented management system a return request for the product, wherein the return request is for a quantity of the product greater than one;
 - determining whether the return request is authorized;
 - creating a first record in the first system in response to a determination that the return request is authorized, the first record including a return authorization number (RAN);
 - issuing, from the first system, the RAN associated with the return request;
 - creating a second record in a second computer-implemented management system in response to receiving the RAN from the first system, the second record being a warehouse request comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the return request;
 - searching a database of the second system for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse;
 - determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the second record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

re-combining the plurality of new records into the second record, when the quantity of the product associated with return request included in the second record matches the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

updating the second record to reflect that the quantity of the product associated with the return request included in the second record matches the quantity of the product received at the warehouse.

2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the first computer-implemented management system is a customer relationship management (CRM) system.

3. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the second computer-implemented management system comprises at least one of a supply chain management (SCM) management system and a warehouse management (WM) system.

4. The computer-implemented method of claim 3, wherein the second record is a delivery request.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises communicating information between the first and second computer-implemented management systems utilizing the RAN.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises providing a shipping label in response to authorizing the return request, the shipping label comprising the RAN.

7.-8. (Cancelled).

9. A computer-implemented method for managing a product return, the method comprising the steps, performed by a computer, of:

authorizing, using a first computer-implemented management system, a request from a customer to return a product, wherein the request from a customer is for a quantity of the product greater than one;

creating at least one record in each of a plurality of second computer-implemented management systems of a supplier when the request for the product return is authorized, the at least one record being a warehouse request comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including a unique identifier, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the request;

assigning the unique identifier to the product return;

associating the unique identifier with each record corresponding the product to be returned;

searching a database associated with the second systems for the pending delivery item using a unique identifier associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the at least one record in each of the second systems into a plurality of new records including the unique identifier and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

exchanging information regarding the product return between the second systems utilizing the unique identifier.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim 9, wherein the second systems comprise at least one of a customer relationship management (CRM) system, a supply chain management (SCM) system, and a warehouse management (WM) system.

11. The computer-implemented method of claim 10, wherein the second systems comprise the warehouse management (WM) system.

12. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the second systems comprise a logistics, execution, and shipping (LES) management system.

13. A computer-implemented method for managing a product return, the method comprising the steps, performed by a computer, of:

assigning at least one return authorization number (RAN) to the product return, wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one;

creating, in a first database of a supplier, a return authorization record for the product return, the return authorization record comprising the RAN;

creating, in a second database of the supplier, a warehouse record for the product return, the warehouse record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return;

searching the second database using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determining, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the warehouse record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the warehouse record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return

included in the warehouse record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

updating the return authorization record and the warehouse record to include information associated with the RAN.

14. The computer-implemented method of claim 13, wherein the return authorization record comprises a plurality of return authorization items.

15. The computer-implemented method of claim 14, wherein each return authorization item comprises a unique RAN.

16. The computer-implemented method of claim 14, wherein the warehouse record comprises a plurality of pending delivery items, each of the pending delivery items being created for at least one of the return authorization items.

17. The computer-implemented method of claim 13, wherein the second database is a warehouse management (WM) system.

18. The computer-implemented method of claim 13, wherein the return authorization record further comprises a product type and a quantity.

19. The computer-implemented method of claim 13, further comprising creating a shipping label based on the return authorization record and communicating the shipping label to a customer.

20. A computer-implemented method for managing a product return, the method comprising the steps, performed by a computer of:

indexing a first record in a first database of a supplier for a product return using at least one unique identifier, wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one;

creating a second record for the product return in a second database of the supplier, the second record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the at least one unique identifier, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return;

searching the second database using a unique identifier associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determining, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the second record in the second database into a plurality of new records including the at least one unique identifier and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

exchanging, between the first and second databases, information related to the product return, wherein each item of exchanged information is identified by the at least one unique identifier.

21. A computer-readable medium including a memory containing instructions for carrying out a method for managing a product return, the method comprising:

creating a first record in a customer relationship management (CRM) system of a supplier for a product return using at least one return authorization number (RAN), wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one;

creating a second record for the product return in a warehouse management (WM) system of the supplier using the return authorization number, the second record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including at least one RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return;

searching a database associated with WM system for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the second record into a plurality of new records including the at least one RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

exchanging between the management systems information related to the product return, wherein each item of exchanged information is identified by the return authorization number.

22. The medium of claim 21, wherein the first record is a return authorization record.

23. The medium of claim 21, wherein the second record is a pending delivery record.

24. A computer-readable medium including a memory containing instructions for carrying out a method, the method comprising:

assigning a return authorization number (RAN) to an approved product return, wherein the product return is for a quantity of the product greater than one;

creating, in a first database of a supplier, a return authorization record for the approved product return, the return authorization record comprising the RAN;

creating, in a second database of the supplier, a pending delivery record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the product return;

searching the second database for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determining, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the pending delivery record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the pending delivery record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the delivery record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

updating the return authorization and the pending delivery records using the RAN.

25. The medium of claim 24, wherein the return authorization record comprises a plurality of return authorization items.

26. The medium of claim 25, wherein each return authorization item comprises a return authorization number.

27. The medium of claim 25, wherein a pending delivery item is created for each return authorization item.

28. The medium of claim 24, wherein the second database is a warehouse management database.

29. The medium of claim 24, wherein the return authorization record further comprises a product type and a quantity.

30. The medium of claim 24, further comprising creating a shipping label based on the return authorization record and communicating the shipping label to a customer.

31. A computer-readable medium including a memory containing instructions for carrying out a method for managing a product return, the method comprising:

authorizing using a first computer-implemented management system a request from a customer to return a product, wherein the request is for a quantity of the product greater than one;

creating at least one record in each of a plurality of second management systems of a supplier for handling the product return, the at least one record being a warehouse request comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including a unique identifier, a product type, and the quantity of the product associated with the request;

assigning the unique identifier to the product return;

associating the unique identifier with each record corresponding to the product to be returned;

searching a database associated with the second systems for the pending delivery item using a unique identifier associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determining, based on searching the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

splitting the at least one record in into a plurality of new records including the unique identifier and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product associated with the request included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

exchanging information regarding the product return between the second systems utilizing the unique identifier.

32. A system for managing a return of a product, the system comprising:

a first computer comprising a first database of a supplier configured to receive a return request for the product, and to generate a first record comprising a return authorization number (RAN) for the product if the return request is authorized, wherein a quantity of the returned item is greater than one; and

a second computer comprising a second database of the supplier, in communication with the first database, configured to create a second record corresponding to the return, the second record comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the returned item associated with the return request;

wherein the second computer is configured to determine, based on searching the second database, if the quantity of the returned item associated with the return request

included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse, and configured to split the second record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the returned item associated with the return request included in the second record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse; and

wherein the first and second database are each configured to exchange information regarding the return utilizing the RAN.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein the first record is a return authorization record.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein the return authorization record comprises a plurality of return authorization items, each corresponding to a unique RAN.

35. The system of claim 32, wherein the second record is a pending delivery record.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein the pending delivery comprises a plurality of pending delivery items each corresponding to a return authorization item.

37.-39. (Cancelled).

40. A system for managing a product return comprising:
a processor; and
a memory comprising instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the system to:

receive a return authorization number (RAN) and to create at least one record corresponding to a product return, wherein each record corresponding to the return item comprises a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the product return;

search a database for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse;

determine, based on a search of the database, if the quantity of the product associated with the product return included in the at least one record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse;

split the at least one record corresponding to the product return into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the product return included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse.

41. A system for managing a product return, the system comprising:
a first computer of a supplier comprising a user interface for:

receiving a return request from a customer, wherein a quantity of the return request is greater than one,

creating a first record comprising a return authorization number (RAN), and

transmitting to the customer an authorization for a product return comprising the RAN; and

a second computer of the supplier, in communication with the first computer, configured to:

receive the RAN,

create, upon receipt of the return authorization, a second record in a second database comprising a pending delivery item, the pending delivery item including the RAN, a product type, and the quantity of the return request,

search a database associated with the second computer for the pending delivery item using a RAN associated with a product received at a warehouse,

determine, based on a search of the database, if the quantity of the return request included in the second record matches a quantity of the product received at the warehouse, and

split the second record into a plurality of new records including the RAN and having different statuses, wherein the different statuses indicate return of a quantity of the product, when the quantity of the return request

included in the at least one record does not match the quantity of the product received at the warehouse.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein the user interface comprises a web site.

43. The system of claim 42, wherein a customer submits a return request via the web site.

44. The system of claim 42, wherein the first computer creates a shipping label and transmits the shipping label to a customer via the web site.

45. The system of claim 41, wherein the first and second computers communicate using an electronic data exchange (EDI).

46. The system of claim 41, wherein the first and second computers communicate using a Basic Application Interface (BAPI.)

47. The system of claim 41, wherein the first and second computers communicate using R/3 information objects.

Evidence Appendix to Appeal Brief Under Rule 41.37(c)(1)(ix)

Not Applicable.

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Related Proceedings Appendix to Appeal Brief Under Rule 41.37(c)(1)(x)

Not Applicable.